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General Notes.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.

Col. Stanton's Recent Descent of the Colorado River.—

Col. Robert Stanton, commander of the Denver expedition now exploring the comparatively unknown regions traversed by the Colorado river, has written to the *Denver Republican* a graphic account of the perilous journey down the wild stream from the head of the Granite gorge of the Grand canyon to the mouth of Diamond creek, to accomplish which required the time from January 24 to March 1. The expedition had to battle upon entering the Granite gorge with mighty cataracts and foaming torrents, sometimes letting their boats down with ropes, and at times portaging all the contents of the boats around rapids. Two of the boats were dashed against rocks and wrecked. Progress was extremely slow. At one point they were delayed five days while one of the wrecked boats was being reconstructed. Of that portion of the Granite gorge from its head to Bright Angel creek, Col. Stanton quotes from his note book, under date of February 7 :

“The canyon is growing more and more picturesque and beautiful the further we proceed. The Granite has lost its awful and threatening look, and slopes back in beautiful hillsides of variegated black, gray, and green. Above this, next to the river, is a stratum of dark sandstone cut into sharp horizontal layers, standing in an almost perpendicular wall, jutting out in places to the edge of the granite, and studded all over with points standing out in the air, darker in color than those behind them, and the top edge cut into smaller points and crevices through which the light shines, giving a rough, beaded appearance.

VIEWS IN THE GORGE.

“At the side of the canyons, and from the bends of the river, the upper portions of the whole gorge are brought into view, showing the great marble and sandstone cliffs benched back far away from the river, while small mountains jut in close between the side canyons and wash nearly a mile and a quarter in height. As we sail along the smooth stretches between the rapids each turn brings some wonderful picture more beautiful than the last. As we look down the river or up a low side canyon, with the placid water between its polished walls of black

and gray and green for a foreground, there rises above the dark sandstone tier upon tier, bench upon bench, terrace upon terrace, stepping back further and further and higher and higher, and in their immensity of height and proportions seeming to tower almost over our heads. First above the darker sandstone come the flattened slopes of the line, and mineralized matter in horizontal layers of yellow, brown, white, red, and green.

“Then rise sheer walls of stained marble 1,000 feet or more, the lower portions yellow, brown, and red, and the coloring of red growing brighter as it nears the top. Above this, smaller benches of marble, at the top of each a little mesa covered with green grass and brushes, and above these a dozen or more terraces of scarlet and flame-colored sandstone, stained on their outer points with black, and the little benches between them relieved by the bright green of the grease-wood and bunch grass, the whole covered with, perhaps, a couple of thousand feet of the lighter gray, yellow, and white sandstone ledges, capped by pinnacles and spires, turrets and domes in every imaginable shape, size and proportion, with all their slopes covered and their tops fringed with pine, cedar, and pinion trees, whose bright green stands out in bold relief against the flaming colors of the sandstone, and the banks of pure white snow that cover the top and have run down into the many gulches along the sides.”

A CHANGE IN THE SCENE.

Further on he writes: “From the southern portion of Powell’s plateau to the mouth of the Kanab Wash the canyon assumes an entirely new form. The granite, except in a few patches, has sunk under the river, and the softer strata of sand and limestone which formed the great slopes above the granite have come down next to the river and rise from the water’s edge in great talus slopes of from 300 to 600 feet high at a general angle of 40 degrees from vertical. The high cliffs of marble and red sandstone bench back from the top of these slopes. Although these outer peaks and cliffs have drawn in close upon the river the canyon itself—that is the inner gorge—is much wider than above, the width being measured between the tops of the great talus slopes. The river is broader, and it sweeps in gentle curves at the foot of the talus, which is covered with bushes, bunch grass, and large mesquite groves. On many of the long stretches where the river can be seen for several miles the picture is one of grandeur and beauty. Grand with its walls of bright colors towering 2,500 feet overhead, beautiful in its long green slopes, with the quiet waters sparkling

in the sun at their foot, for the rapids are much less frequent, and stretches of still water are growing longer and longer.

“From the mouth of the Kanab Wash for about twenty miles down is perhaps the narrowest and deepest part of the great inner gorge. The lovely sandstone and limestone ledges have sunken under the river, and the marble and upper sandstones come close into the water. At the bottom the gorge is from 150 to 200 feet wide, and the river runs between vertical walls—vertical, however, for only about 80 feet up—and fills the whole space from wall to wall. The walls of this portion of the canyon—(and it comes nearer being a true canyon than any other part of the river)—rise above the water 3,000 feet, and they are almost vertical; the benches are narrower, and the vertical cliffs between the benches higher than in any other section. And yet, strange to relate, from one end of this section to the other there is a bench about 50 feet above high water, running almost parallel with the grade of the river, of solid marble wide enough to build a four-track railroad upon and not interfere with the perpendicular walls above or the river below.

IN FLOOD AND RAPID.

“The night before we reached Kanab the river rose four feet; it continued to rise for two days and two nights. How much the rise was I am not absolutely certain, but believe from good evidence it was fully ten feet. Just below Kanab Wash there is a rapid one and one-half miles long. On Tuesday morning we started down this rapid. We made this mile and a half in just four and one-half minutes. We then had for some time few rapids, but a rushing, singing current, forming eddies, whirlpools and back currents fearful to contemplate, much more to ride upon.

“About 2:30 p. m. we heard a deep, loud roar and saw the breakers ahead in white foam. With a great effort we stopped upon a pile of broken rocks that had rolled into the river. Much to our surprise when we went to look, the whole terrible rapid that we had expected to see had disappeared, and only a rushing current in its stead. While we stood wondering there rose right at our feet those same great waves, 12 to 14 feet in height and 100 to 150 feet long across the river, rolling down stream like great sea waves, and breaking in white foam with a terrible noise. We watched and wondered and at last concluded this was the fore front of a great body of water rolling down this narrow trough from some great cloudburst above. Believing that discretion was the better part of valor, we camped right there on that pile of rocks, fearing that although our boats would ride these waves in safety,

we might be caught in one of these rolls just at the head of a rapid, and, unable to stop, be carried over the rapid with the additional force of these rushing breakers.

"The next morning, to our surprise, we found the flood had begun to recede. After an early breakfast we started on what afterwards proved to be the wildest, most daring and exciting ride we have had on the river. The canyon so narrow, the turns quick and sharp, the current rushing first on one side and then on the other, forming whirlpools, eddies and chutes, our boats caught first in one and then in the other, now spun around like leaves in the wind, then shot far to the right or left almost against the wall, now caught by a mighty roll and first carried to the top of the great waves, and then dropped into the 'trough of the sea,' with a force almost sufficient to take away one's breath, many times narrowly escaping being carried over the rapids before we could examine them, making exciting and sudden landings by pulling close to shore, and with bow up stream rowing hard to partially check our speed, while one man jumps with a line to a little ledge of rocks and holds on for his life and ours too.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

"At last the expected combination comes. We round a sharp turn and see a roaring, foaming rapid below, and as we come in full view of it we are caught in a mighty roll of flood wave.

"We try to pull out to an eddy—it is all in vain; we cannot cross such a current. We must go down over the rapid. In trying to pull out we got our boats quartering with the current, over the rollers and through the breakers up to the head of the rapid. In this position they travel a course, first in the air and then in the water, only to be compared to the spirals of a corkscrew. When we find we must go over the rapid, with great effort we straighten them round and enter in good shape, bow on. It lasts but a moment, the cross current strikes us and we are turned, go broadside down over the worst part of the rapid (which proves clear of rocks), then, turned and twisted about, we go through the rest of the fall in wild, wizard waltz, to music more weird than that of the bagpipe. At the end of the fall our sturdy boats float out into an eddy as quietly and gracefully as swans. Noble little crafts! May they, the Bonnie Jean and Lillie, live long enough to float on more peaceful waters than those of the Colorado river, over whose rushing torrents they have glided now near 500 miles and never once been upset. And peace be to the ashes (I should say splints) of the sweet Marie that we left in the dark canyon above."—*The Evening Star, Washington, D. C.*